

NEW SHOREHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Block Island School

October 20, 2008

7:00 p.m.

The New Shoreham School Committee met in open session on Monday, October 20, 2008, in the media center of the Block Island School. Chair William Padien called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The following members were present: Shea Butcher, Annie Hall, Sean McGarry, William Padien, and Richard Tretheway. Leslie Ryan and Davida Irving were also in attendance.

Approval of Minutes

A motion (Hall, Padien) to approve the minutes of the meeting held on September 15, 2008, as presented carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (Hall, Padien) to approve the minutes of the meeting held on October 1, 2008, as presented carried with a vote of 5-0.

Reports

Nancy Cole gave the fiscal report through September 30, 2008, stating that with a quarter of the year gone, the budget seems to be in good shape. She highlighted a few areas where more than 25 percent of the budget has been expended, including software maintenance and building maintenance. William Padien stated that maintenance

contracts with Trane and Delta are being reviewed and he hopes that agreements can be signed shortly. Mrs. Cole also submitted a sheet listing the budget changes that affect the fund balance, the difference in electricity usage between 2007 and 2008, and reconciliations of the lunch and student activities accounts. Mr. Padien requested that more be done to conserve electricity as the projected shortfall is over \$46,000 for this year. Dr. Irving agreed to inform the staff of the need to conserve. A motion (McGarry, Padien) to accept the fiscal report through September 30, 2008, as presented carried with a vote of 5-0.

Sean McGarry stated that the lunch program was going to be discussed later on the agenda, but because he did not receive his packet of information until last Friday he was not adequately prepared. He has repeatedly requested, to no avail, that this information be made available to him a week before the meeting in order for him to prepare for these types of discussions. Other members of the committee were not concerned with the availability of the packets.

Rob Closter reported that the soccer season is off to a great start, but the school field is in tough shape and several students have been injured. He recommended top soil and hydro-seeding; Annie Hall requested that he get estimates. He further reported that he has been working on the athletic handbook with the help of the interim athletic committee. He understands that academics must come first, but athletics provide many benefits. It is crucial to include as many

individuals in the programs as possible and would like to have students in grades 8-12 be eligible for the varsity teams and those in grades 5-9 eligible for the junior high teams. This overlapping of grades would ensure the proper participation levels. Members of the Principal's Advisory Committee are not in favor of the fifth and sixth grade students participating on the junior high teams. Dr. Irving stated that she would love those students to participate, but for them to play games off island requires that they be able to self-teach and they are not ready for this type of education. It was suggested that this discussion be included on the next agenda.

Dr. Irving reported on the following:

- The students are having a wonderful year academically; their grades and tests results will support her statement.
- Once again, the NECAP results show Block Island School as high performing and commended.
- Since the beginning of the school year there have been six students of the week with Cori Black, Rudelyn Pila, and Tom Conant the three most recent students honored.
- On October 9 and 10, representatives from RIDE worked with five secondary faculty members to begin curriculum writing. She feels that by the end of the year much of the work will be completed.
- The lighting in the parking lot is insufficient. She requested that lighting be installed as soon as possible because one teacher almost fell because the parking lot is so dark.
- The Save a Watt contest will be held again this year. She will see

how each classroom can be included in the contest.

- A financial aid night will be held on December 1 for students in grades 10-12 and their parents.

Mrs. Ryan reported that she will be attending a meeting of Rhode Island superintendents on Friday to review the NECAP science scores.

Mrs. Ryan stated that information has been sent to Rhode Island Interlocal Risk regarding the damage to musical instruments and other equipment caused by several leaks during the heavy rains. It is hoped that we will receive some reimbursement for the repairs that had to be made.

Old Business

A motion (McGarry, Hall) to approve Policy IF: Open Campus Rules and Policy IG: Open Campus Contract as written carried with a vote of 5-0.

The Tentative Agreement between the New Shoreham Employees Association and the Town of New Shoreham, submitted for review, has been approved by the Town Council and the Employees' Association, but needs School Committee approval as well. In the new agreement, which is through June 30, 2011, the employees will receive a three percent increase in each of those years. The wage ranges will increase in July 2009. The current health and dental

benefits will continue with no co-payment on the part of the employees, but the emergency room deductible will increase from \$25 to \$100 beginning July 2009. A motion (Tretheway, Hall) to approve the Tentative Agreement between the New Shoreham Employees Association and the Town of New Shoreham and authorize the chair to sign carried with a vote of 5-0. Sean McGarry expressed his displeasure that the contract does not require a co-payment for medical benefits when it is required of the teachers.

New Business

A request was received from John and Kerri Spier to home school their children, David, Samuel, and Selena, from December 2008 through June 2009. They plan to continue with the Calvert program for Selena and the boys have been enrolled in the University of Missouri High School program. A motion (Hall, Tretheway) to approve the request from John and Kerri Spier to home school their three children from December 2008 through June 2009 carried with a vote of 5-0.

A request was received from Jessy Howarth and Jim Murray to home school their daughter, Ayla, in pre-algebra. They plan to follow Block Island School's curriculum. A motion (McGarry, Tretheway) to approve the request from Jessy Howarth and Jim Murray to home school their daughter in pre-algebra for the 2008-2009 school year carried with a vote of 5-0.

A discussion of the lunch program food costs and menu requirements was included after a brief discussion at the last School Committee meeting. Mr. McGarry felt that the decision to increase the lunch prices was a chain of command issue and should have been made by the superintendent, not by the principal and food service director, after it has discussed in an open forum. Dr. Irving stated that if the School Committee felt it was inappropriate she would make sure it did not happen again. Shea Butcher stated he thought it was a good decision and Dr. Irving should have the right to make that decision. Richard Tretheway stated that he thought the superintendent, principal, and food service director should be able to make the decision to increase prices without the School Committee getting involved. Mr. Padien stated that he thought the School Committee getting involved in this issue was micromanaging. Food Service Director Kelly Robertson stated she has been the director for six years and has increased prices several times without School Committee involvement. Dr. Irving suggested that a “town meeting” be held to give students and parents a chance to ask questions and/or voice concerns about the lunch program. Mr. Tretheway thought the forum was a good idea, but cautioned that while it is important for people to have a voice, not all would get what they wanted.

Mr. Padien requested that job descriptions for the various office staff be reviewed to see if anyone could take on some of the fiscal clerk’s duties while she deals with the uniform chart of accounts. According

to Nancy Cole, the problem as she sees it is having to “creating” the new general ledger system when “create” is not in her job description. Lynne Cunningham, an officer of the Town Employees’ Association, stated that an open School Committee meeting was not the correct forum for this discussion. Dr. Irving suggested that she and Mrs. Ryan sit down with the support staff to discuss the situation because when asked to help she has found them to be very collaborative. Town Manager Nancy Dodge mentioned that management does have the right to alter or assign tasks without consultation with the union as long as it is not over and above the job description for a particular position. Mrs. Ryan will report back to the committee with suggestions on how to fix the situation.

A motion (Hall, Padien) to accept the resignations of Rosemary Tobin and David Turner as head coaches for the varsity basketball teams carried with a vote of 5-0.

Several applications were received for the special education director position and three interviews were held on Tuesday, October 14. The interview committee, consisting of Dr. Irving, Nancy Greenaway, Kate Mello, Joanne Warfel, and Martha Velie-Gass, unanimously recommended William Anderson for the position. A motion (Padien, Hall) to consent to the appointment of William Anderson as the special education director pending the acceptance of the terms of his contract was tabled until later in the meeting.

Several applications were received for the food service helper position, including a proposal to share the position. The Food Service Director recommended that Margaret O'Neill and Judith Kisseberth share the position. Both women have served as volunteers in the cafeteria/kitchen over the last several years, are familiar with the food service operation, and can sub for each other. A motion (Hall, Padien) to consent to the appointments of Margaret O'Neill and Judith Kisseberth as food service helpers carried with a vote of 5-0. They will be compensated at the rate of \$12.50 per hour.

Proposals to provide IT support for the Block Island School computer network were received from Eugene Warfel, JPJ Tech Solutions, and The Right Click. The Technology Committee reviewed the proposals and recommended that all of the proposals be rejected and the scope be narrowed before re-advertising.

The School Improvement Plan, which was developed by a committee of staff, students, and parents, was presented to the School Committee for approval. Mrs. Ryan stated that all schools are required to have a plan and, once approved, she will submit it to the Rhode Island Department of Education. A motion (Padien, Tretheway) to approve Block Island School's 2008-2010 School Improvement Plan as presented carried with a vote of 5-0. Shea Butcher requested that thank you notes be sent to the School Improvement Team.

Calendar of Events

A calendar of events for October and November was submitted for School Committee information. The next regular School Committee meeting is scheduled for November 17, 2008.

Correspondence

Various pieces of correspondence were forwarded for School Committee information, including a letter from the New Shoreham Teachers' Association regarding the formation of the agreed upon team to assess the school's transition from site based management to the current model of a full-time principal.

Mr. Padien stated that he could not find the correspondence or the contract regarding the uniform chart of accounts, but some kind of understanding or agreement needs to be written to allow fiscal responsibility and checks/balances. Attorney Myers stated that the town is the parent corporation of this municipality with the school being secondary on issues of finances. Finances come from and the school department reports to the town. The town is not interested in the daily record keeping of the school, but a document is needed to clarify the limitations of the shared software. A motion (Padien, Hall) to authorize Denise Myers, with input from School Committee members, to draft a document regarding the placement of the software for the uniform chart of accounts on the town's computer network and, after approval of this document by the School Committee, to authorize her to sign it on the School Committee's

behalf carried with a vote of 5-0.

Executive Session

A motion (Padien, Hall) at 8:56 p.m. to go into executive session pursuant to Rhode Island General Laws 42-46-4, 5(a)(2) for litigation and contract negotiations carried with a vote of 5-0.

Open Session

A motion (Padien, Butcher) at 10:00 p.m. to return to open session carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (Padien, Hall) to seal the minutes of the executive session carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (Padien, Hall) to consent to the appointment of William Anderson as Special Education Director carried with a vote of 5-0.

Adjournment

A motion (Hall, Padien) at 10:02 p.m. to adjourn carried with a vote of 5-0.

Marsha L. Gutierrez, Clerk

Date approved: November 17, 2008